

7326
Faith triumphant in Death;

A

FUNERAL SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

The Rev. W. ROMAINÉ, A. M.

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW WARDROBE, AND ST. ANN'S,
BLACKFRIARS; AND

LECTURER OF ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE WEST;

PREACHED IN

The Parish Church of St. Dunstan,

Sunday Evening, August 9th, 1795,

By the Rev. W. GOODE, A. M.

LATE CURATE TO MR. ROMAINÉ, AND HIS SUCCESSOR AS
RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW WARDROBE, &c.; AND
TUESDAY EVENING LECTURER OF ST. LAWRENCE JEWRY.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

SECOND EDITION.

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A

S E R M O N, &c.

HEB. xi. 13.

THESE ALL DIED IN FAITH.

I HAVE lately been called, my dear friends, to some of the most afflicting and painful services that ever I was engaged in; of which the present is by no means the least.

To pay a last tribute of respect to a dear, departed, venerable, servant of God, to condole with you who loved him, and hung upon his words with rapture and delight, is indeed distressing to my feelings; but such a tribute I could by no means refuse to pay.

From my earliest infancy I have entertained a rising veneration for the character we now lament, a veneration which has ripened into respect and affection by a close connexion of near ten years, with the most uninterrupted cordiality and good understanding. And, though the necessary distance between youth and age, such great acquirements in knowledge and in grace and such inferior attainments in both, must have had an influence; yet as I revered and loved him as a father, and served him as a friend, I have lamented his loss with the most painful sensibility as to myself, while I sympathize with the general sorrow that has impressed those who loved his person, and the cause in which he was so fervently engaged.

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He is now no more below ! we cannot but weep, it is the language of nature, which grace does not command us to reject but to regulate ; a language sanctioned by the example of the Redeemer, who wept at the tomb of his friend.

A variety of motives led me to solicit the leave of this church, with which I have been kindly indulged ; especially as our dear minister for above forty-six years sustained in it the office of Lecturer.—The subject I have chosen, you well know, was the peculiar and delightful theme of his conversation, his preaching, and his writings ; exemplified in the whole of his life ; and, we can truly say, he died in the faith of Jesus, and is now enjoying the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul. While we thus see it exemplified, we know that he would, and we know that we must, ascribe all the glory to the power and riches of divine grace. And may God make the present consideration effectual to kindle in our breasts a desire after the “ faith of God’s elect ; ” that we all may be followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.

In this chapter the apostle is setting before us the wonders that faith hath wrought ; and, having illustrated it by the example of the antient patriarchs, in the works they performed through the faith of God, he follows them to their dying beds, and sees them exercising the same faith there. Retiring from the busy scenes in which they had been engaged with quietness and satisfaction, they rejoiced in the assured persuasion of the fulfilment of the promises to themselves and their posterity, and stood with joyful expectation of glory upon the borders of the eternal world. They lived in faith, and so rose above the difficulties and distresses of their pilgrimage ; they now died in faith, rejoicing amidst their pains and languishings in the prospect that was beyond. Oh precious faith ! that produces such admirable effects

in such a world as this ; still it is the same, still has the same objects, the same security, the same prospects, and brings the same consolations and supports. Our dear departed father in Christ found the rich experience of this, and affords another striking instance, to the many gone before, of the glory and suitability of the gospel of Christ, the fulness of the promise, the all-sufficiency of the grace, the faithfulness of God, and the consolatory application of the Lord the Spirit.

But, as I fear I must detain your attention rather longer than usual, we will immediately enter upon the subject before us. And here we shall, *first*, speak a little of faith in general : *then* consider the peculiar advantages of faith in the hour of death : illustrate the whole in the life and death of our departed minister : and conclude with an address to different characters.—May the Spirit of Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith, seal the word with his divine influence, and make us all partakers of like precious faith with him.—We are

FIRST, to speak of faith in general.

This is one of those graces of which we find the most glorious and surprizing things said in the word of God ; and those that understand its nature and effects can easily perceive the reasons. It is the channel of all spiritual communication, it unites to Jesus as the principle of the spiritual life, all the actings of which are carried on, and the enjoyments consummated, by the faith of the SON OF GOD.

Faith simply considered is a giving credit to the TRUTH OF GOD, and its objects are whatever God hath revealed. There are two things which it respects in these ; first, the TRUTH ITSELF upon the declaration of God, and then, the IMPORTANCE AND EXCELLENCY of that truth. The latter of these is equally a part of divine revelation as the former. And the distinction of a dead from a living faith, we apprehend, is this, that

it is a persuasion of the *truth* without a correspondent discovery of its *suitableness and glory*.—A man may reason himself into a belief of the general system of the gospel, while he feels but little of its effects upon his heart; its external evidences, of miracles and prophecies, are so decisive as to demand assent to its declarations; but, while the heart of man is averse to spiritual enjoyments, there can be no discovery of its excellency, no relish of its blessings. For this there must be a “new heart and a right spirit created within us.” Hence, says the apostle, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. Faith is in this view altogether “the gift of God;” the effect of regenerating grace; the eye of the understanding that behold the glories of divine truth, and brings its consolation and its energy into the heart. Oh what views now open to the humbled and enlightened mind, the contrite but believing heart, according to the power of Faith! views with which he was before unacquainted; views which enliven the hopes, and sanctify the soul.

The whole word of God, as such, is the object of faith. But it cannot be supposed that all its doctrines are of equal importance. For, though all have their influence in the Christian life and warfare, and the more clearly and extensively perceived, by the strongest faith, the more blessed the effects, yet there must be an acknowledged distinction. Some of them are absolutely necessary, others useful to the believer, others for his more abounding consolation and direction. And as our faith apprehends variously, and in different degrees, so there is a great variety in Christian experience.

But saving faith must undoubtedly embrace all those truths that are revealed as necessary for salvation.

tion. Happy is it that these are but few. The state of man as fallen, the way of reconciliation through the atoning blood of an Almighty Saviour, and the necessity of its application by the Spirit of Jesus, include all that a sinner needs to know for time or for eternity. To know myself as a sinner, to know Christ as the all-gracious and almighty Redeemer, to have the enjoyment of this by the Spirit's teaching in my heart, this is the knowledge that faith communicates, that sanctifies and that saves the soul. A confession of sin is indeed very common; but that view of it which humbles the sinner, and lays him low at the foot-stool of divine mercy, is no otherwise effected than by a believing application of the truth by the Spirit. Then sin appears in all its guilt and defilement, its demerit and condemnation, viewed in the light of God's eternal law: and the sinner cries, not with a formal exclamation, but from the bottom of his heart, God be merciful to *me* a sinner. Mercy is his plea, mercy is his hope, sovereign mercy the only remedy for human misery. O blessed Gospel! that here opens the animating prospect to the fainting spirit. Blessed Jesus! who stands so prominently forth on every sacred page as the all-sufficient Saviour of returning sinners.—Here he lies and is at rest.

The divine person, the almighty power, the infinite glory, the deep humiliation, the bleeding cross, the atoning blood, the perfect and everlasting righteousness, the glorious intercession, of Jesus, the Lord our Redeemer, are discovered in the truth of God as the firm support and unchanging security of those that trust therein.—Faith believes the record, acknowledges the suitableness, flies to the refuge, relies upon the all sufficiency, experiences the blessing; and adores the sovereign grace of the Father that devised, the infinite love of the Son that executed, the almighty power of the Spirit that enlightens and applies.—The conscience at peace, the heart at rest, realize all the

glorious promises of the Gospel, while every power is sweetly drawn with the cords of love, and consecrated to the service of a reconciled God in Christ.—The Spirit of Jesus, enlightening the mind, “ shines also into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ ;” and, implanting that faith which beholds *him*, nourishes it from day to day by the means of his own appointment ; and thus, in its daily exercise, glory is given to the Redeemer, and blessings received into the soul, in proportion to the power of faith. Weak faith brings weak consolation, strong faith brings strong consolation and effects into the heart and life. But that faith which leads to Jesus, and unites to him, secures the same privileges, though not the same present enjoyments, to every true believer. A God in Christ is a God of promise, a God keeping promise, and all the promises of the Gospel belong to such. Blessings, unnumbered blessings are discovered in that rich storehouse of all blessings. Through the hope of these they overcome the world ; like Moses “ count the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt ;” or, with the great apostle, “ count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The men of this world see through a false medium even things that are present and visible. Faith discovers all under the regulation of a God and Father in Christ Jesus, all directed by his wisdom for the advantage of his people : providences ordered, afflictions sanctified, crosses turned into blessings, trials into mercies, temptations driving nearer to Jesus, and “ all things working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” But beyond faith renders invisible things visible, penetrates the vail, discovers the King in his beauty, realizes what we hope for

as actually existing, and “ beholding the glory of the Lord changes into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.” Thus all the promises of the Gospel are received and trusted to, in Christ, to his glory, to our comfort, sanctification, and salvation.

Every act of faith implies a humble dependence upon God, a sense of our deficiency and emptiness, a looking to God to fulfil his declaration, and a patient expectation of it from the hand of the Redeemer. Nor is the exercise of Faith without its supply; it does receive grace for grace, grace for the time of need, and such a supply of consolation as the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, sees best. If, therefore, we could but trust the faithful promise of God, (the ground and encouragement of Faith) there is not a want but it discovers a full supply in the exalted Redeemer, nor a situation but there is grace not only for patience, but for thankfulness and joy. As the apostle beautifully expresses it, “ My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches, in glory, by Christ Jesus.” Faith without a promise is presumption: but, where I have the promise of God, my faith may go to the whole extent of that promise, without danger of being mistaken or deceived. I may rejoice in the certain expectation of its accomplishment; and, though clouds and darkness surround his ways of providence or grace, I trust a faithful God, assured that light shall spring out of darkness, and the prayers of Faith be turned into the songs of Praise.

These are the peculiar views which you have so long heard—heard in such a superior manner—heard with such energy and unction, such dignity of elevation, such earnestness of persuasion, such sweetness of love. Our dear, departed, venerable, Minister had experienced the riches of the grace himself, and therefore could commend it to others. And he spake

like one who felt what he delivered. He could say, and often did, with the apostle, "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, declare we unto you." He knew much of the state of human nature, and the evil of sin as in the heart, and he learnt it, as he himself tells us*, "most by his own experience, and by many sore and daily conflicts in his own soul." This had so endeared to him the precious Saviour of sinners, that, nearest to the spirit of the great apostle of the Gentiles, the very name of Jesus seemed to kindle at once the ardour of divine love: his soul was raptured at the sound; every thing else yielded to the irresistible energy; his tongue dwelt upon the pleasing theme, often repeating, as we have heard him from this place especially,

"Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb,
"We love to hear of thee.

These delightful truths flowed delightfully from his lips; "his doctrine distilled as the dew;" while this place has resounded with the essential glories, the deep humiliation, the all-sufficient grace, the unchanging love, of a dying Jesus; themes ever dearest to his heart, and therefore ever on his tongue.—He had the most exalted views of the Saviour of guilty men, and therefore he "preached Christ,—his sole subject—his all in all; knowing at the same time he could "warn every man" of his sin and danger, could "teach every man" in the way of peace, truth, and righteousness, without deviating from this one subject, which he did with that peculiar wisdom with which God had favoured him.

But we must hear his voice no more! Oh that the remembrance of it might sound in our ears till we enjoy the blessings it expatiated on; till like him we die in this faith of Jesus, and enter upon the

* Funeral Sermon for Mr. Jones.

fulness of its glories, beyond even his burning heart and shining talents to express. But to return.

Having spoken of faith in general, as it comes from God, realizes the truth of God, sanctifies the heart, brings its blessings into enjoyment, and returns to him the glory, we must now consider,

SECONDLY, The peculiar advantages of Faith in death.—“ These all died in Faith.” Or, as our dear departed friend would have rendered it, in *the* Faith, the faith of Jesus. They had the same grand object of faith as we, we have the same object of faith as they, Jesus Christ, in life and death the friend and Saviour of his people. These ancient believers died (as he expresses it) in the *act* of faith, acting faith on Jesus and his faithful promises; or, as the apostle, in the following part of this verse, “ not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them;” persuaded of their truth, embracing them as excellent, as the objects of their earnest desire and love.

As faith is the great mean of triumphing over the world, of passing comfortably through life, so is it the only source of consolation in the awful hour of death.

ETERNITY is a very serious subject, and, when standing on the borders of it, it appears a serious thing to launch forth, a serious thing to know what is my ground of hope of an happy eternity. But faith secures upon the rock of ages; gives a calmness and quietness to the soul; and, when in lively exercise, an unshaken confidence; opens the prospect beyond; and perfumes a dying bed, and the mouldering dust, with odours of the heavenly world. Thus it was with our dying friend, who confirms our faith by his dying testimony; thus it shall be with that sleeping dust we lately committed to the silent tomb, in sure and certain expectation of a resurrection to eternal glory.

A dying

A dying believer, under the power of faith in death,

I. Rests in a firm reliance upon the promise and truth of God.

Faith is not always in the same lively exercise in life; nor is it always at its highest in death. But, when it leads the humble and supplicating sinner to the Saviour of sinners, as the only hope of Israel, it brings salvation if not the immediate comfort of it. It may also be so in death. It may be weak in its exercise, attended with fears and doubts, and yet be the faith of God's elect, the faith that bringeth salvation in the end. This was the sentiment of our late beloved pastor when he preached his funeral sermon for Mr. Jones. Where he observes, "For wise reasons God may not then fill his people with great comforts, but cannot you trust your comforts with God, the God of all comfort? will you not have time enough to be comforted when you get to heaven?" But still, we may observe, this is not God's usual method of dealing with his people. He has promised, "when they pass through the waters he will be with them, and through the rivers they shall not overflow them, &c." His rod and his staff are therefore their stay and their support. There is a faith that rests the soul on Christ, that brings a quietness and serenity beyond all the glittering joys of earth, though in the pains of death. The believer tries his foundation, and he finds it secure. And the more tried, the more precious is this corner stone of his dependence. In the confidence of faith "he will trust in the Lord and stay upon his God." Jesus is all powerful and gracious, the promise is true, his God is unchanging, and there he anchors through the storm. Hence there is a pleasing tranquillity of hope that holds him free from alarms, or perhaps he is able to say still farther, with the apostle, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is

is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." This, we know, is a hope that maketh not ashamed; for it brings peace into the conscience, and love into the heart, and gives all the glory to a covenant God in Christ by trusting his truth. But this is not all. Faith in more lively exercise brings not only a quiet hope, but

II. Divine supports and consolations.

"As afflictions abound consolations by Christ abound also." While the believer views all things as in the hand of his covenant God, all things under the direction of his covenant head in glory, he is assured that all is *well*. The time, the measure, the issue, of his afflictions, he knows are "in that covenant which is well ordered in all things and sure." He is confident, therefore, they will be conducted for the *best*. If he hath lived long in the Christian warfare, "the trial of his faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope;" and he rests upon the promise, expecting present help and present supports, whatever his necessities may be. Nor is his faith vain; "His strength is equal to his day;" "The eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." He has secured his pardon by an application to the blood of Christ—he hopes to stand justified before God in the righteousness of his Redeemer—he has known the power and virtue of the Spirit when he was convinced of sin, enabled to believe on Jesus, turned from the love of sin, and taught to delight in God and his ways. And now the same faith supports his hope, for, if when he was an enemy he was reconciled to God by the death of his Son, he trusts that, being reconciled, he shall be saved by his life. Rom. v. 10. He cannot look back on his good works as the ground of his encouragement. If he has done any, it was the grace of God that made him what he was; the sin that was his own debased them all; and, though as the work
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of the Spirit of God he acknowledges the grace with thankfulness, the one foundation of a sinner's hope is still his rock and refuge, and there only he finds it safe to trust. The full sufficiency of the Redeemer is his support and confidence; faith has embraced and lived upon it through life, faith still adheres closely to it in death, and, if now in lively exercise, happy is the dying bed of faith. A present sense of pardon and favour, direction and support, brings a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, and renders the dying moments of the believer the sweetest moments of earthly existence.—When, separated from the world and all its concerns, faith carries on the intercourse with the world unseen, happy is that converse which the soul enjoys with God. Many have borne their testimony to its delights, and now we add another to their number. Satisfied with, and retired from, the world, it is sufficient that *God is there*. His presence can solace pain, can sweeten affliction, can turn trouble into joy, and elevate the dying believer in the ecstasies of faith.

“These all died in faith.” When we read the account of this circumstance in the Old Testament, each is nearly in the same words.—“He gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people.” Gen. xxv. 8. I cannot but think our venerable father in Christ was describing his own experience, when treating on this passage, in his *Triumph of Faith*, in the chapter on old age; every part of which is applicable to himself. Let us present you with an abstract. “His old age was good, in body and soul. Whatever infirmities he had they were intended for good, and actually did him good. He was a very cheerful pleasant old man. The peace of his mind had a sweet influence on his temper and behaviour. It kept him from being fretful and peevish in his family, &c. He was also happy in his last

last years: for he spent them in faith, and, when they came to an end, he died in peace; with his last breath he committed his spirit into the hands of him who had redeemed it. "Full of years." It is in the original one word—he was satisfied—He was satisfied with what he enjoyed of the favour and friendship of his God, who had been his shield to defend him from all sins and enemies, and also had promised to be his exceeding great reward. This he obtained, when he was gathered to his people, to the general assembly and church of the first born, and to the most blissful communion of the three in Jehovah. All the children of Abraham, treading in the steps of his faith, have the same God to deal with, who keepeth promise for ever."

These are the joys of faith. But another act, and it is the last act of faith before it is changed into fruition, is,

III. It enjoys the prospect of everlasting glory.

The apartments of death are no other than the temple of the Lord, and death itself the very gate of heaven. The happy believer, dying in the faith, and ripe for glory, with the triumphant views of faith before him, with lively but patient expectation awaits the summons to enter into the joy of his Lord. Thus there is "an abundant entrance ministered into his kingdom and glory."

The allusion is most beautiful: it is that of a ship, with all its sails expanded, entering with a fair breeze into the port for which it is destined; that its owners, the storms and labours of the voyage being over, may enjoy in quietness and security the benefit of their former toils. There is not a passenger that wishes to return upon the stormy ocean, but each welcomes with shouts the approaching land. Such is the view by which faith apprehends the land of promise. No more toils—no more weakness—no more afflictions of body—weariness of mind—doubts
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of unbelief—or horrors of temptation: these shall soon be laid down, buried in the depths of the seas, lost in the waves of death, to be seen no more. The dying believer goes down to the grave, having hold of the hand of his Redeemer. There *he* lay; and as he arose so all his followers must. He falls asleep in Jesus, as quietly as the weary traveller lies down to rest, waiting the morning of the resurrection. His sleeping dust shall sleep in peace, the care of a covenant God, who was Abraham's God long after he lay in dust. But that moment the imprisoned spirit breaks from its confinement, and enters the city of God: "absent from the body, present with the Lord." And soon shall he change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. There is not a more glorious sight on earth than this. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" precious their dying faith, precious their immortal spirits, precious their sleeping dust. But beyond "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

To die with faith in exercise is to realize the prospect, to anticipate the joy, to possess the earnestness of immortality. There every faculty shall be exalted and enlarged, every holy disposition completed, and all employed in the eternal contemplation of the divine wisdom and glory, in his attributes, works, and ways, and in the eternal enjoyment of his presence and unchanging love. Here is the end of faith, when all its trials and its conflicts are over. And, however feeble its present efforts, it shall soon be conqueror, and introduce to "A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY."

I have been led to these views from the well known character of the dear, departed servant of
God

God we now lament: and from the peculiar circumstances, and progressive dealings of God towards him, in his last affliction. Each of our observations will be illustrated and confirmed by his living character, and dying consolations. He was on earth a display of the power of grace; and is now, no doubt, in the immediate presence of him, whom with a peculiar ardour, and jealousy of spirit, he loved and served below.

To speak of his character is not an easy thing, especially to me: but I shall speak the sentiments of my heart, and leave it with God. Not that I am afraid of exaggeration, while, as I know he would, I ascribe the glory to the grace of God. He was a character that God had formed for his own glory; and, with regard to his failings, for no doubt he had such, it is a sufficient apology to say of them all, that, though he was a great man—a wise man—a good man—and a man of God—he was a *man*.

Perhaps some of you may think I detain your attention too long, while others, I know, who loved and valued him, will not think any thing beneath their attention that respected him, nor any time too long to recollect the benefits which they have received by his ministry. I shall, therefore, enter more minutely into circumstances, not to extol the man, though now beyond the reach of injury, but to illustrate the grace and power of God, which made him what he was; to derive additional arguments for your faith, additional motives to your love of that divine Redeemer, whom he so ardently loved; and to persuade others to love and serve so good a master, who “giveth not as the world giveth,” but is faithful in life, faithful in death, and crowns all with his eternal presence and glory.

The Reverend William Romaine was born September, 1714, at Hartlepool, a small town in the county of Durham, that will from hence be more remarkable

remarkable as the birth place of such a character than any circumstance besides.—He was educated first at Hertford College, and afterwards at Christ Church College, Oxford; where his early genius and his attention to literature eminently discovered themselves. Of this I have been favoured with a remarkable anecdote.

Dress was never his foible, his mind was superior to such borrowed ornaments; and, immersed in nobler pursuits of literature, before consecrated to a still more exalted purpose, he paid but little attention to outward decorations.—Being observed to pass by rather negligently attired, a gentleman who was a visitor enquired of his friend, a master of one of the colleges, “who is that slovenly person with his stockings down?” The master replied, “that slovenly person as you call him is one of the greatest geniuses of the age, and is likely to be one of the greatest men in this kingdom*.”

At this time he became acquainted with some, who were afterwards the brightest ornaments, and dignitaries, of our Church; who, though they could not follow him in his increasing religious views, and therefore in a course of time continued but little intimacy, always acknowledged him with respect, and, we trust, have now welcomed him to immortality. We have a testimony as to his eloquence from one of these, whose natural and acquired talents made him no inferior judge of such attainments: in which he compares his affecting and engaging elocution to the flowing style of Cicero;

“Nor Tully’s eloquence forsake Romaine.”

But all these abilities were, by grace, laid at the foot of the cross, and made to bow, however humiliating, to whatever might promote the glory of his master,

* This was told by the late Julius Bate, author of the Hebrew Lexicon, to a friend now living.

and

and the good of men. Soon after he opened his mouth to preach, the Lord enlightened his mind with clearer views of his truth, and warmed his heart with the love of Christ, and the love of souls.

He came to London, expecting here to find engagements; but, waiting for some time without success, he had nearly left the place; and this city had most probably been deprived of his so valuable and successful labours, but for a most remarkable interposition of Providence; which, as I have heard him relate it with pleasure to myself, and it shews what great events hinge upon the most trivial, and to us accidental, circumstances, I will relate, not doubting but it will afford you equal pleasure in the hearing.— He had actually sent his trunk on board a vessel, and was himself walking down to the water side to secure his passage, when he accidentally, or rather providentially, met a gentleman, a total stranger to him, who inquired if his name was not Romaine, as, being acquainted with his father many years ago, he observed such a likeness as induced him to take the liberty of inquiring: he replied, it was. He then informed him that the Lectureship of that Parish was vacant*, and asked if he would accept it: he promised to do so if obtained without his canvassing, (which he never would undertake); when, being successful, he altered his determination, and, from that time, has continued his labours to the good of multitudes in body and soul in this city.

A little after he obtained the morning preaching of St. George's, Hanover Square. But, alas, the dignities and riches of this world are not the best preparations for the reception of the Gospel! He was driven from thence under the glorious imputation of crowding the Church with those who thirsted for the salvation of the Lord. And it was well ob-

* St. George's, Botolph Lane.

served by a nobleman to one who made that complaint, that " he wondered such complaints should be made with respect to the House of God, by those who could bear to be much more incommoded at the playhouse without complaint." An observation equally applicable in the present day as fifty years ago.

In the year 1749 he was chosen Lecturer of this Church; as he preached in this place forty-six courses of Lectures. The opposition which he here first endured, and the boldness, firmness, and integrity, with which he sustained it, some of you well remember: till by the voluntary interposition of the then Bishop of London* he was relieved; whose successor also had an early intimacy with, and always continued to express a high respect, for Mr. Romaine. But upon this we will not enlarge. Our venerable Minister hath lived long enough to live down opposition; and persecution is not the character of the present day: though we know that, even now, the distortions of envy, the bigotry of names, and the misrepresentations of ignorance, can overspread the excellency of a character that would otherwise be highly esteemed. In this place he went through the whole Bible by way of exposition *once*, and many parts *twice*; and here he closed his labours in the service of his Lord and Master.

An equal interposition of Providence introduced him to his Living of Blackfriars: but the circumstances I am not thoroughly acquainted with.

The leadings of Providence must in all these appear still more remarkable, when it is remembered that he would never solicit a vote on any occasion; persuaded that it argued a want of faith and confidence in God, whose work he was engaged in, and who would, no doubt, provide a place for his glory.

* Bishop Terrick.

He considered it indeed beneath the clerical character; but, as he was never backward to acknowledge the obligation when received, it was evidently not pride but principle.

To the last of these he was chosen about August 1764, but did not commence till March 2, 1766. With what fear and trembling, with what sense of his own insufficiency, with what dependence on the Lord, he entered upon that cure, is evident from a most interesting letter, written at the time upon that subject *.

He began his ministry there with that glorious declaration, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And how truly he adhered to this determination you all know. He continued to serve his parishes in the faith and truth of the gospel, till he grew old among them; and then bore the richest fruits in his old age. In this he was peculiarly favoured, being afflicted with no symptoms of bodily decay, till the last stroke came that took him from earth to a better service above. It may truly be said of him, as of one of old, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated;" and he has frequently spoken of it with peculiar gratitude to God.

It is also remarkable that, after publishing the Life and Walk of faith, and realizing it in his conversation, he had just published his Triumph of faith,

* The Letter begins thus. "I have ever had such awful apprehensions of the cure of souls, that I durst not, though often solicited, undertake it. Ever since I knew the plague of my own heart, I have found myself plagued to death with watching over it. What must it be to watch over two or three thousand! who is sufficient for this? I feel myself as unfit for it, as to have the government of the world upon my shoulders. But, being appointed to this Church, not only without my seeking, but against my will, and having an undoubted call from *God*, therefore, my sufficiency for the work being of *God*, I dare not stand out, I have been forced to say, "Here I am, send me."—&c. &c.

when called by faith to triumph over afflictions and death, the last enemy, he finished his work, and entered into the joy of his Lord.—But, before I speak of this, I must beg to be indulged with a few words as to his general character.

As a MAN he was a firm, faithful, and instructive, friend, a lively and edifying companion. He possessed a natural cheerfulness of disposition, and firmness of mind, which, sanctified by grace, shone forth in the holy joy, and confidence, of faith.

He had a quickness of apprehension, and a readiness of determination. In his conversation, as well as in his writings, he was short, and sententious; which was often misunderstood for want of temper and irritation.

But in his *domestic* character he shone forth the ornament of his profession, and an evidence of the power of grace: the kindest of husbands, the most affectionate of fathers, and the best of masters. Of this we have the most convincing proof, since all who were about him loved him, and those who were the nearest to him loved him the most.

As a SCHOLAR—his acquisitions were extensive, and his learning sound. He had a just and critical knowledge of the three learned languages, but especially of the Hebrew tongue, which he much cultivated, much delighted in, and pressed on others to acquire. He had a comprehensive acquaintance with nature, and natural philosophy; and, if in this last he held some peculiar views, different from the present generally approved system, he had well studied the points, and stood, even in his peculiarities, in company with some of the brightest geniuses, and deepest scholars, of his time. But, what must be mentioned with peculiar pleasure, with all these natural and acquired abilities, he knew when to conceal his acquirements as well as how to use them; nor ever appeared ostentatious to exhibit them. When led to the knowledge
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and power of the truth his natural talents were consecrated for God; and in the pulpit, with a divine simplicity, he remembered nothing but his Master's work and glory, and studied nothing but how best to impress his excellency and salvation on the minds of men. And, though he might have been reckoned amongst the wise of this world, he was contented to be esteemed a fool by such, that he might be "wise to win souls:" for he had been taught, by grace, to account the reproach of Christ greater honour than all the dignities on earth.

As a CHRISTIAN—I have frequently admired the cheerfulness, the consistency, and fervour of his piety. He evidently lived much with God; inflexibly abstracted from the world; much in the enjoyment of his Redeemer's presence, and in the realizing views of eternity in its most glorious and animating light. His devotion was pure and sincere, glowing lively from a heart filled with the love of Christ: he was always ready, therefore, to throw out a hint, in his concise manner, for the glory of his name, and the consolation of his people; though he studiously avoided every controverted point as unedifying and dangerous. His whole conduct was in unison with his profession; and, to the honour of the grace of God in him, a long life needs no apology.

As a DIVINE—he had a most comprehensive knowledge of the word of God, the great repository of spiritual wisdom, which he always read regularly through once in the year; and he enjoyed an especial clearness of perception in its grand and fundamental truths.

As he was a minister of the church of England, he was such from conviction of its apostolic authority; he was, therefore, throughout life firmly attached to its discipline, its liturgy, and its doctrines. In his earlier years he had resisted the offer of much temporal advantage, and endured much opposition

in it, rather than depart from its communion; well convinced that he was in the line of duty, and God, who had placed him there, would provide him his work, and supply his necessities. His firmness has sometimes been interpreted into bigotry; but, as I conceive, through inattention or misunderstanding. If such a temper might arise in the fervency of youth, maturer wisdom had meliorated his disposition; at least, I must profess, that the many years I have been with him (though many opportunities offered) I have never once heard him express any thing but the most cordial love to all, "who loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:" this was his only test—denominating all things else but the scaffolding of the building, that must be taken down before the whole shall appear in its glory. And I am in possession of a letter that discovers the most unbounded liberality and candour of his mind.

As a PREACHER—he shone with peculiar advantage. God had formed him for natural elocution and simple eloquence. His voice possessed an admirable sweetness; his countenance a liveliness of expression; his eyes sparkled with delight, and every feature expressed the sensibility of his heart while engaged in his delightful work; his very countenance was a sermon. Yet all was natural and unaffected; for he took as much pains to simplify his style, as many do to ornament and polish. His energy, his pathos, his lively action, arose from the fervour of his spirit in love to Christ. While, therefore, he was simple without meanness, and plain without vulgarity, he was dignified without laboured elevation, was understood by the lowest, while the highest were edified and pleased.—Early in life he was a *Boanerges*, and there is a peculiar fire, energy, and alarming tendency, in his early compositions: but this had given way to a milder manner, and more delightful subjects in general. Yet still, when such subjects occurred,

occurred, he touched them with uncommon force and effect, so as to astonish and alarm the soul. On the sabbath he took the whole range of gospel truth, but, at those seasons when he supposed his hearers to be more select, his favourite subjects were the glory of Christ, and the great privileges of the gospel. These he represented in the most glowing colours, and with the most lively animation. His was, no doubt, a dispensation of remarkable light and evidence in the great fundamental truths of the gospel, much beyond what most attain. The clearness of his views, and the perspicuity of his expression, exhibited the glories of truth to the understanding, and diffused the force of truth upon the heart. There was also a peculiar style in his preaching, which to us seemed most calculated to enlighten the understanding, to warm the affections, to animate the desires, and to sanctify the heart in the love of God. Zealous for the glory of Christ, and jealous in his spirit of every thing that might detract therefrom, he could not bear without sensible indignation any thing of a contrary tendency; he would say boldly, with the apostle, "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ he must be Anathema Maranatha." When speaking on such subjects as these, we were ready to suppose that the flaming seraph, flying from the altar, had touched his heart and lips with the burning coal, that kindled there the heavenly flame, and diffused its influence all around. He seemed, with one foot on the heavenly land, taking a survey of the glories which were there, at the same time stooping down to earth that he might draw us after him. I confess, when I have heard him on these subjects, I have been ready to wish to resign back my commission; had I not heard in my ears that awful sound "woe be to *me* if I preach not the gospel;" if I had not recollected that "the excellency of the power is of God and not of us."—

Wherever he came he was ready to declare the Saviour's grace. Of this subject he never tired in public or in private. He came immediately to the point, with a peculiar art that God had given him; could say much in little; and what he uttered was always fresh, always new, as though the delightful story of redeeming love had never been told, never been heard before. And yet the humble views he entertained of himself are thus beautifully expressed in one of his letters to a friend.

" I am an old preacher, and have seen enough of his glory to be ashamed of myself: I reprobate all my services, and, if I was to begin again, I would try to shoot higher, and I do. Blessings on him, he is above all blessing and praise!"

With such gifts of God, consecrated in simplicity to his glory, no wonder he was popular; and, though he bestowed more of himself than most apprehend, that he was the greatest instrument of charitable contributions. But he was still more useful,—how effectually so, by the great power of God attending his ministrations, let multitudes declare that are now honoured to publish the same truths to guilty men, or who enjoy its abundant blessings, to the knowledge of which they were brought by his instrumentality. He might say of many, with the apostle, " need we epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? ye are our epistles written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

But now that voice that charmed you, that charmed so wisely, shall be heard no more! God hath closed his mouth in death—that he may have all the glory, and to discover that the power was of him. And yet we bless God that he hath left his dying testimony, and confirmation, to the truths he preached. Many of you have received them as your motives to holiness, and the ground of your consolation and support in time and eternity; and you are ready to ask,
after

after so bold a maintenance of them through life, what were their effects in the time of trial?—A patient reliance—a consolatory support in affliction—and triumph in the hour of death. He proved, and experienced, his foundation stable. And, to shew what God did for him then, and to confirm your faith and hope, we have collected a few of his dying views and expressions. May God make them useful for this purpose.

It is plain he never said any thing with a design to be again spoken; for he evidently forgot all but God, his own soul, and eternity, absorbed in the present enjoyment of Christ, and the glorious prospect that was before him.

Soon after he was taken he expressed his firm persuasion that he was not for this world but for another, not for time but eternity. And, on that very morning, he prayed earnestly in the family for divine supports, whatever troubles might come upon them, which might be many; and afterwards expressed his hopes of a joyful eternity.

In a few days afterwards, "you are taking," says he, "much pains to prop up this feeble body; I thank you for it, but it will not do now."

His only companion was his Hebrew Psalter, which lay close by him, and out of which he frequently read a verse or two, not being able to attend to more. The nature of his disorder was such that he could speak but little; and, being once asked if he would see some company, he replied, he needed no better company than he enjoyed. O happy those who are thus satisfied in God!—But there was a progress in his experience, much like what we have before stated in the dying faith of the believer. As soon as taken, though sensible it was for death, there was that sweet reliance upon the promise and truth of God, which he so often inculcated. Hence arose that remarkable patience, that not one fretful or murmuring

murmuring word ever escaped his lips. The more evidently the effect of grace, as through his long life he had scarcely known what bodily affliction meant; and had never, till very lately, been interrupted by illness in the discharge of his ministerial duties.

Soon after he was seized, a friend called upon business. He took the opportunity of saying, he hoped he was better, and happy in his views: "Yes," replied he, "upon that point I have no doubt, for I have much of the presence of Jesus with me." And, upon his taking leave, he, in his humiliation of spirit, begged to be remembered to me for my prayers, as he was unable to converse with me, and hoped his friends and the whole congregation would remember him at the throne of grace. This he frequently afterwards repeated to myself.—At other times he said, he had been in the deep waters, but had enjoyed much support.—That he waited to enter into the courts of the Lord, that his soul was athirst for God, yea, for the living God.

After he had been from home, upon his return, I visited him, and found him a little revived. He said to me, he had lain long at first in the arms of death, and, if recovering, it was very slowly; "but this," says he, "is but a poor dying life at best; however, I am in his hands who will do the best for me," and added, with a peculiar energy which I shall not soon forget, "I am *sure* of that. I have lived to experience all I have spoken, and all I have written, and I bless God for it." He then uttered something as to the importance of such views at such a season, but, being exhausted with these few words, he reclined back in his chair, and I could not understand them.—After much the same expressions he added to another friend, "I have the peace of God in my conscience, and the love of God in my heart, and that you know is sound experience"—and again, "I knew before the doctrines I preached to be truths, but
now

now I experience them to be blessings." Where is the foundation that will bear such a trial as this? where is that opposer of the essential glories, the atoning blood, and abounding grace, of the Redeemer, that can bear such a dying testimony to the doctrines *he* maintains?—Speaking of the visit of a friend, he said, he thanked him for it, he had come to see a saved sinner. This he had often affirmed should be his dying boast, and that he desired to die with the language of the publican on his lips, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

When he again left town his strength rapidly decayed. But now, "as his outward man perished, his inward man was renewed day by day." Weakest in himself he was strongest in the Lord; nearer the goal the surer the victory; nearer the confines the brighter the glory.—To shew his acquiescence in the providence he said, that it was now near sixty years since God had first opened his mouth to publish the everlasting sufficiency, and eternal glory, of the salvation of Jesus; and now he had shut it, that he might give him more experience in his heart of what he had said concerning it in his life. He never complained of any thing but *sin*, but this he lamented as the source of all our miseries, especially one morning, when he was expounding, in family devotion, the prayer of Hezekiah; saying, to those around him, he should have had none of those weaknesses and languishings if he had no sin.—At another time he exclaimed, "Oh how good is God, what a good night he has favoured me with, and what a blessed prospect I now see before me!"—In one of his lowest states, being asked if God was with him, he replied, "Yes he is indeed, and he is *my* God." Such views as these he often expressed throughout his illness.—At another time he said, he should soon be upon the mount Zion that is above, there he should dwell

dwell for ever, and there should be his everlasting rest.

The day before his death a friend addressed him in this manner, " I hope, my dear friend, you now find the dear Saviour Jesus precious to your heart."—" Yes," he replied, " yes, yes, more precious than rubies, and all that can be desired on earth is not to be compared to him. The Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God." The friends who were with him have no doubt but his last hour was the happiest hour of his life. He was in the full possession of his mental powers to the last moment; and near his dissolution he cried out "*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*, glory be to thee on high, for such peace on earth, and good will unto men." After this he continued in prayer and praise, for his lips were seen to move, and his hands were united in a praying posture, till his breath was exhausted, and without a struggle, groan, or sigh, he fell asleep in Jesus. Oh happy death that is in the faith of Jesus! God grant us like mercy. He was quickened by faith, lived and walked by faith, triumphed over opposition, enemies, and trials, then he died in the faith of Jesus; that he might be a confirmation to you his lamenting friends of the reality of those glorious Truths, and the preciousness of that exalted Saviour, that he had so long preached, in whom many of you have savingly believed.

I need not now, I am confident, apologize for saying too much; but many I fear will think I have said too little, and, if so, I trust they will pardon my insufficiency. But, I must yet add, it is a loss on earth we may reasonably lament.—The *King* has lost a faithful subject, a zealous and conscientious advocate—his *Country* a praying friend, and intercessor before God—the *Church of England* one of its brightest ornaments, most attached to its discipline, its spiritual liturgy, and its evangelical doctrines—the *Church of*
God

God at large a most faithful and successful minister, who exhibited the truths of the gospel, through a long and laborious life, with peculiar lustre, and under a glorious unction of the Spirit of God. But if we turn the scene we rejoice;—we rejoice in the complete triumphs of his faith, now that he has been called to the kingdom of his Master, and welcomed to the joy of his Lord.

If I may be indulged with a few minutes longer, it shall be employed in impressing, upon the minds of the different characters here present, the use that God may design us to make of this solemn and affecting providence.

And let us, if such be here, speak,

First, to the infidels and mockers of the present day.

Draw near, ye sons of dissipation, and consider the death-bed of the believer. He dies in faith, and triumphs in the prospect. You also *must* die. Now you may ridicule the faith and expectation of the believer; but we challenge the wit, the wisdom, of infidelity to controvert the reality of such supports, and the heroism of the infidel to display the like. I have heard of the calmness and quietness of such, or rather their insensibility, in death; but never of their rejoicing in its pains. It is not the pleasure of satisfaction, but the awful impulse of necessity: “this is a grief, and I *must* bear it.” “Oh that ye were wise, that ye understood this, that ye would consider your latter end.” Hear the testimony of one of your most boasted advocates in the view of death, compare it with the peaceful, the joyful, end of faith; and may God seal the instruction for your soul’s advantage. It is that of no less a person than the great Lord Chesterfield.

“I have run,” says he, “the silly rounds of business and of pleasure, and I have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret
their

their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is in truth very low; whereas those who have not experienced always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare. But I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machine, &c. When I reflect back upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look upon all that has passed as one of those romantic dreams which opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No; for I really cannot help it. I bear it—because I *must* bear it whether I will or no.—And I think of nothing but killing time, now that he is become mine enemy.” &c.—I leave this to your own reflections.

Let us speak

Secondly, to those who have heard the gospel from his mouth, but heard in vain.

My friends, what a dispensation have you suffered to be lost! If you have not heard him to advantage I should despair of persuading, if I did not know that the work was of God; and that Paul might plant, and Apollos water, but God must give the increase.

Oh how affectionately has he besought you, that “you would not receive this grace of God in vain.” The very last sabbath evening that he stood in this place he particularly urged it upon your hearts. He prayed with peculiar fervency, he wrestled for you at a throne of grace, that, if that were the last time he should address you, God would make it effectual; that he might not rise up as a swift witness against you in the great day of the Lord. Some of you perhaps have
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had your passions moved by his affecting persuasion, but yet your hearts have remained unchanged by grace; you have given an assent to the doctrines he preached, but have not experienced their power. It is such as you who have brought the ill-founded charge of licentious tendency on such glorious truths. May God discover to you their nature, efficacy, and glory, and make you to feel their influence, and then you will soon live down the calumny.—If he hath pleaded in vain on earth, oh hear him from the grave—hear his dying testimony. It is as though he had said, “Believe, my brethren, the truths that I have spoken are the truths of God. The power of them I have known, the consolations I now experience. Jesus is indeed that *precious precious Saviour* to a dying sinner that I have so long proclaimed him to be. Without an interest in his salvation you must perish in your sins, but in Christ there is no condemnation. I have pleaded, and ye have not received; oh stay, stay no longer; but fly to the sinner’s refuge. Let me not finally accuse you that I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought and in vain. Let the grace and compassion of a dying Saviour to me a saved sinner incline you earnestly to seek after his salvation, and ye shall find: for he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.”

You are ready to wish that you might die the death of the righteous; oh then seek after that almighty Saviour that can make you righteous before God; and that gracious Spirit that can sanctify the heart, to bring forth the fruits of righteousness to his glory.

Let us speak

Thirdly, To the weak in faith.

To these like his Master he payed in his discourses a peculiar attention. Consider what God has done for his people, and let your faith be encouraged. Whatever you are in yourselves, the
same

same Jesus, the same Almighty helper, can produce the same glorious effects in your hearts, and the same mighty consolations in the time of your afflictions: for he hath "all power in heaven and in earth." Now you look forward fearful and discouraged. But many, "who through fear of death have all their life-time been subject to bondage," have been supported like him in the deep waters: and, as the prospect drew near, fear vanished, hope revived, and the nearer prospect of an eternal world hath been attended with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Leave then all your concerns in his hands. And, while trusting in Jesus, and living to his glory, he will manage the best for you, and grant all needful supply even to the end: He will be "your God for ever and ever, and your guide even unto death."

We will conclude by speaking

Fourthly, A few words to those whom God hath enlivened and comforted by his ministry, and who, therefore, loved his person, and lament his loss.

It is true you must hear his voice no more! no more his lips shall sound through this place the glories of the Redeemer, the power of his arm, the compassion of his heart, the riches of his grace, whereby your minds have been enlightened, your hearts warmed, and your afflictions comforted. You cannot forget the force and energy with which he spake, and the consolation you have often received under his ministry: and you ought not. "Remember those who have had the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." His Master has seen good to call him to himself; and as far as it relates to him it is all *right, absolutely right*. He says to you, "Be still, and know that I am God." This afflicting providence should, therefore, quicken us who are left as labourers in his vineyard to greater diligence and activity: should quicken

quicken you to pray more earnestly for your Ministers; for the effusions of his Spirit, and the almighty efficacy of his grace, upon us and our ministrations. But it calls you not only to pray but to LIVE: to shew the power of the truth; to contradict every false aspersions; and to evince, by the strongest proof, that, "the grace of God teacheth to deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world."

We are told that "the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." If such a view as this should impress the mind, let it incite more earnest prayer to God for a guilty land. Often has our venerable Pastor stirred you up to this in the most animating manner; and requested you, by the prayer of faith, to commit all into the hand of the Lord, undisturbed and undismayed; to continue in your duty to your king and country, assured that a peaceful praying subject is the best subject of a state, and most likely to promote its welfare and his own.

May we all profit by these instructions, that yet our abundant privileges civil and religious may be spared to us. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Let the present solemn intimation be heard and improved, that the day may never come when our teachers shall be driven into corners; nor when confusion and anarchy shall take place of order and of law. May God hear the earnest prayers of his departed servant, that true and vital godliness diffused abroad may correct the folly of the times, and promote universal peace on earth, and good will amongst men.

Some of you had hoped, that your beloved minister would have been the instrument of solacing your bed of affliction, and pointing you forward to your eternal rest.—But he is gone before! And, if he could now address you from the heavenly world, he would encourage you to press the closer to God.

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"If the streams are cut off, come then more immediately to the fountain. If the instrument be gone, let Christ be your all in all. Follow me as I followed Christ. See in me that he is an all-faithful friend. He will prepare your way, comfort you in death, and then bring you to the same eternal glory."

Oh that we may so live by the faith of the Son of God that, whenever we are called to die, we may die in faith, trusting in the Lord, rejoicing in his presence, triumphing in the believing prospect of his glory. Then may we all meet our dear departed minister on high—our feet standing on the mount Zion which is above, "when all the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." God grant us this grace, and to him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be the eternal praise. Amen.

4 OCT 58

THE END.